



U. S. EPA ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSE TEAM

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

SOP: 1827
PAGE: 1 of 22
REV: 3.0
DATE: 02/05/01

ANALYSIS OF MERCURY IN AIR WITH A MODIFIED NIOSH 6009 METHOD

CONTENTS

- 1.0 SCOPE AND APPLICATION
- 2.0 METHOD SUMMARY*
- 3.0 SAMPLE PRESERVATION, CONTAINERS, HANDLING, AND STORAGE*
- 4.0 INTERFERENCES AND POTENTIAL PROBLEMS*
- 5.0 EQUIPMENT/APPARATUS
 - 5.1 Atomic Absorption Spectrophotometer
 - 5.2 Strip-Chart Recorder, Integrator, or Printer
 - 5.3 Glassware and Containers*
- 6.0 REAGENTS
 - 6.1 Type I Water (ASTM D1193)
 - 6.2 Concentrated Nitric Acid (HNO₃)
 - 6.3 Concentrated Hydrochloric Acid (HCl)
 - 6.4 Stock Mercury Solutions
 - 6.5 Stannous Chloride, 10% in 1:1 HCl
 - 6.6 Calibration Standards*
- 7.0 PROCEDURES
 - 7.1 Sample Preparation*
 - 7.2 Calibration Standards*
 - 7.3 Laboratory Control Standard*
 - 7.4 Calibration Verification Standards*
 - 7.5 Method Detection Limit Standard*
 - 7.6 Blank Spike/Blank Spike Duplicate*
 - 7.7 Lot Blanks*
 - 7.8 AA Calibration and Measurement



U. S. EPA ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSE TEAM

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

SOP: 1827
PAGE: 2 of 22
REV: 3.0
DATE: 02/05/01

ANALYSIS OF MERCURY IN AIR WITH A MODIFIED NIOSH 6009 METHOD

CONTENTS (Cont'd)

8.0	CALCULATIONS*
9.0	QUALITY ASSURANCE/QUALITY CONTROL
9.1	Initial Calibration/Calibration Check*
9.2	Method Detection Limit*
9.3	Continuing Calibration Verification*
9.4	BS/BSD Samples*
9.5	Dilution Analysis*
10.0	DATA VALIDATION*
11.0	HEALTH AND SAFETY*
12.0	REFERENCES
13.0	APPENDICES
	A - NIOSH Method 6009*

*These sections affected by Revision 3.0

SUPERCEDES: SOP #1827; Revision 2.0; 05/13/99.



U. S. EPA ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSE TEAM

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

SOP: 1827
PAGE: 3 of 22
REV: 3.0
DATE: 02/05/01

ANALYSIS OF MERCURY IN AIR WITH A MODIFIED NIOSH 6009 METHOD

1.0 SCOPE AND APPLICATION

This method is a modification of NIOSH Method 6009 for mercury (Appendix A). It is applicable to the analysis of indoor air samples of volatilized elemental mercury (Hg) collected on solid sorbent material (typically Hopcalite) contained in glass collection tubes. The sorbent sample is digested and the Hg concentration is determined by the cold-vapor Atomic Absorption (AA) spectroscopy technique. The method is simple, rapid, and relatively free of matrix interferences.

Detection limits, sensitivity, and optimum ranges for Hg analysis will vary with the sorbent material, volume of air sampled, and models of atomic absorption spectrophotometers used.

These are standard operating procedures which may be varied or changed as required, depending upon site conditions, equipment limitations or limitations imposed by the procedure. In all instances, the ultimate procedures employed will be documented and associated with the final report.

Mention of trade names or commercial products does not constitute U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) endorsement or recommendation for use.

2.0 METHOD SUMMARY

Indoor air samples of elemental Hg are collected on solid sorbent material contained in glass tubes according to NIOSH method 6009. The sorbent material from the collection tube (typically 200 mg in a single section) is quantitatively transferred to a 100-milliliter (mL) volumetric flask. The sample is digested by first adding 2.5 mL of concentrated nitric acid followed by 2.5 mL of concentrated hydrochloric acid. After digestion is complete, the sample is diluted to volume with deionized water.

The sample is analyzed by the cold-vapor AA spectroscopy technique with no additional dilutions. The principle is essentially the same as direct aspiration AA, except a cold-vapor generator system, rather than a flame, is used to atomize the sample. Radiation from a given excited element is passed through the vapor containing ground-state atoms of that element. The intensity of the transmitted radiation decreases in proportion to the amount of the ground-state element in the vapor. A monochromator isolates the characteristic radiation from the hollow cathode lamp and a photosensitive device measures the attenuated transmitted radiation.



U. S. EPA ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSE TEAM

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

SOP: 1827
PAGE: 4 of 22
REV: 3.0
DATE: 02/05/01

ANALYSIS OF MERCURY IN AIR WITH A MODIFIED NIOSH 6009 METHOD

3.0 SAMPLE PRESERVATION, CONTAINERS, HANDLING, AND STORAGE

Sample holding times, suggested collection volume, preservative, and type of containers are as follows:

Holding Measurement	Collection Volume Req. (L)	Type of Containers	Preservative	Time
<hr/>				
<u>Mercury in air:</u>				
Solid sorbent	10 - 200 ⁽¹⁾	glass tube	sorbent, 25° C	21 days

⁽¹⁾ The volume of air collected is directly related to detection limit; the larger the volume, the lower the detection limit.

4.0 INTERFERENCES AND POTENTIAL PROBLEMS

Although the method minimizes dilution and sample matrix effects, the technique is not completely interference free. Inorganic and organic Hg compounds may cause a positive interference

Cross-contamination and contamination of the sample can be major sources of error because of the sensitivities achieved with the cold-vapor AA spectroscopy technique. The sample preparation work area should be kept scrupulously clean. All glassware should be cleaned as directed in Section 5.3.

5.0 EQUIPMENT/APPARATUS

5.1 Atomic Absorption Spectrophotometer

A single- or dual-channel, single- or double-beam instrument having a grating monochromator, Hg hollow cathode lamp, photomultiplier detector, adjustable slits, a wavelength range of 190 to 800 nanometers (nm), and provisions for interfacing with a strip-chart recorder or computer, printer, autosampler, and Hg cold-vapor generation system.

5.2 Strip-Chart Recorder, Integrator, or Printer

A recorder is useful to provide a permanent record and for easy recognition of any problems with the



U. S. EPA ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSE TEAM

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

SOP: 1827
PAGE: 5 of 22
REV: 3.0
DATE: 02/05/01

ANALYSIS OF MERCURY IN AIR WITH A MODIFIED NIOSH 6009 METHOD

analysis.



U. S. EPA ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSE TEAM

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

SOP: 1827
PAGE: 6 of 22
REV: 3.0
DATE: 02/05/01

ANALYSIS OF MERCURY IN AIR WITH A MODIFIED NIOSH 6009 METHOD

5.3 Glassware and Containers

All glassware, polypropylene, or Teflon™ containers, including sample bottles, should be washed in the following sequence: detergent, tap water, 1:1 nitric acid, tap water, 1:1 hydrochloric acid, tap water, and Type I water. If it can be documented through an active analytical quality control program, using spiked samples and reagent blanks, that certain steps in the cleaning procedure are not required for routine samples, those steps may be eliminated from the procedure.

6.0 REAGENTS

All standard solutions are prepared and documented in accordance with ERT/REAC SOP #1012, *Preparation of Standard Solutions*.

6.1 Type I Water (ASTM D1193)

Use Type I water for the preparation of all reagents and calibration standards, and as dilution water.

6.2 Concentrated Nitric Acid (HNO₃)

Use commercially available high-purity, spectrograde acid certified for AA use.

6.3 Concentrated Hydrochloric Acid (HCl)

Use commercially available high-purity, spectrograde acid certified for AA use.

6.4 Stock Mercury Solutions

Use a commercially available Hg standard solution, accompanied by a certificate of analysis, or prepare a 1000 micrograms per milliliter (µg/mL) stock standard solution from high purity mercuric oxide (HgO) using Type I water and redistilled HCl. Dissolve 1.0798 grams (g) of dry HgO in 50 mL of 1:1 HCl, then dilute to one liter (1 L) with Type I water.

6.5 Stannous Chloride, 10% in 1:1 HCl

Dissolve 20 grams (g) reagent grade stannous chloride in 100 mL concentrated HCl. Slowly add this solution to 100 mL Type I water and mix well. Prepare fresh daily or each time calibration standards are prepared.

6.6 Calibration Standards

For those instruments that do not read out directly in concentration, a calibration curve is prepared



U. S. EPA ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSE TEAM

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

SOP: 1827
PAGE: 7 of 22
REV: 3.0
DATE: 02/05/01

ANALYSIS OF MERCURY IN AIR WITH A MODIFIED NIOSH 6009 METHOD

to cover the appropriate concentration range. For best results, intermediate and working standards should be prepared fresh each time a batch of samples is analyzed. A blank and a minimum of five working standards must be used to calibrate the AA instrument.

Prepare all calibration and check standards using the procedures outlined in Section 7.0. Ideally, all QC standards are prepared by spiking blank sorbent media. This matches the sample matrix and, thereby, minimizes sample matrix effects. QC standards may also be prepared by spiking reagent blanks if sufficient blank sorbent media tubes are not available, or variability exists within media blanks.

7.0 PROCEDURES

7.1 Sample Preparation

1. Quantitatively transfer the sorbent and the front glass wool plug from each sampler tube into a 100-mL volumetric flask.
2. Add 2.5 mL of concentrated HNO_3 followed by 2.5 mL concentrated HCl.

NOTE: The Hg must be in the oxidized state to avoid loss. For this reason, the nitric acid must be added first.

3. Allow the sample to stand for 1 hour or until the black sorbent is dissolved. The solution will turn dark brown and may contain undissolved material.
4. Carefully dilute to 100 mL with Type I water.
5. The final sample solution (blue to blue-green in color) contains 2.5 percent HNO_3 , 2.5 percent HCl, and is analyzed for Hg with no additional dilution (except for samples containing high concentrations of Hg).

7.2 Calibration Standards

Prepare a calibration blank, and a minimum of five working standards in graduated amounts in the linear part of the calibration range (0.2 to 10.0 $\mu\text{g/L}$) by spiking blank sorbent media (from unused sorbent tubes) with known amounts of Hg. Dissolve the blank sorbent media, using steps 1 - 3 of the procedure outlined in Section 7.1. Spike each standard solution with the appropriate amount of Hg, and dilute to volume per step 4 of the procedure outlined in Section 7.1. NOTE: The calibration blank will also be used for the Initial Calibration Blank (ICB) and Continuing Calibration Blank (CCB) during sample analysis.

Calibration standards may also be prepared by spiking reagent blanks with known amounts of Hg to



U. S. EPA ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSE TEAM

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

SOP: 1827
PAGE: 8 of 22
REV: 3.0
DATE: 02/05/01

ANALYSIS OF MERCURY IN AIR WITH A MODIFIED NIOSH 6009 METHOD

generate a calibration curve if sufficient blank sorbent media are not submitted, or variability exists within media blanks.

7.3 Laboratory Control Standard

Prepare the laboratory control standard (LCS) by spiking blank sorbent media (same lot and type of media) with a known amount of Hg (at or near midrange of the calibration curve). Use an independent source of Hg (different than that used to prepare calibration standards) for the LCS sample. Prepare the LCS sample using the procedure outlined in Section 7.1 at the same time the samples are prepared. A LCS will be analyzed with the frequency of one per batch.

If calibration standards are prepared by spiking reagent blanks, the LCS sample is also prepared by spiking a reagent blank with a known amount of Hg.

7.4 Calibration Verification Standards

Prepare the initial calibration verification (ICV) and the continuing calibration verification (CCV) standards by spiking blank sorbent media with known amounts of Hg (at or near midrange of the calibration curve). Prepare ICV and CCV standards using the procedure outlined in Section 7.1.

If calibration standards are prepared by spiking a reagent blank, the ICV and CCV standards are also prepared by spiking reagent blanks.

7.5 Method Detection Limit Standard

Prepare the method detection limit (MDL) standard by spiking blank sorbent media with a known amount of Hg at the expected MDL (typically half the concentration of the lowest calibration standard) using the same source used for calibration. Prepare the MDL standard using the procedure outlined in Section 7.1.

If calibration standards are prepared by spiking reagent blank, the MDL standard is also prepared by spiking a reagent blank.

7.6 Blank Spike/Blank Spike Duplicate

Prepare the media blank spike (BS) and blank spike duplicate (BSD) samples by spiking blank sorbent media with known amounts of Hg (5 to 10 times the detection limit) at a frequency of one in twenty samples or per batch. Spike blank sorbent media with appropriate amounts of Hg (near the midrange of the calibration) and prepare BS/BSD samples using the procedure outlined in Section 7.1. BS/BSD samples are prepared in the laboratory to monitor precision and accuracy of the method.

Use the BS/BSD samples delivered to the laboratory with unknown samples, or blank tubes from the



U. S. EPA ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSE TEAM

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

SOP: 1827
PAGE: 9 of 22
REV: 3.0
DATE: 02/05/01

ANALYSIS OF MERCURY IN AIR WITH A MODIFIED NIOSH 6009 METHOD

same lot if none are provided with the samples.

7.7 Lot Blanks

This section applies only if calibration and QC standards are prepared in reagent blank. If this is the case, a minimum of three (3) lot blanks must be prepared and analyzed with the samples.

7.8 AA Calibration and Measurement

Differences between the various makes and models of satisfactory AA instruments and cold-vapor generators prevent the formulation of detailed instructions applicable to each system. The analyst should follow the manufacturer's operating instructions for a particular instrument and cold-vapor generator system.

Analyze the working standards together with the samples and blanks. Analyze the full set of working standards at the beginning of the run to establish the initial calibration curve. Analyze additional standards during sample analysis to confirm instrument response (see Section 9.0).

Samples with concentrations of Hg over the high standard must be diluted into the linear calibration range (see Section 9.5).

8.0 CALCULATIONS

For determination of concentration, read the Hg value (B) in $\mu\text{g/L}$ from the calibration curve or directly from the read-out system of the instrument. Calculate the concentration of Hg in the sample (A) as follows:

$$A = \mu\text{g/L Hg in sample} = B \frac{D \% C}{D}$$

where:

B = Concentration of Hg from the calibration curve ($\mu\text{g/L}$)
C = Amount of acid blank matrix used for dilution (mL)
D = Sample aliquot used for dilution (mL)

Note: If no dilution was required, $C = 0$, and $A = B$.

Calculate the amount of Hg (W) for each sorbent tube:

$$W = \mu\text{g/tube Hg} = A (0.1)$$



U. S. EPA ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSE TEAM

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

SOP: 1827
PAGE: 10 of 22
REV: 3.0
DATE: 02/05/01

ANALYSIS OF MERCURY IN AIR WITH A MODIFIED NIOSH 6009 METHOD

where:

A = Concentration of Hg in the sample ($\mu\text{g/L}$)
 0.1 = Final solution volume (L/tube)

Calculate the concentration ($\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$) of Hg in the air volume sampled:

$$\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3 \text{ Hg} = 1000 \frac{W - BLK}{V}$$

where:

W = Amount of Hg in each sorbent tube ($\mu\text{g}/\text{tube}$)
 V = Volume of air sampled (L/tube)
 BLK = amount of Hg in the blank tube ($\mu\text{g}/\text{tube}$)
= zero (0) when standards are prepared by spiking blank sorbent media; or
= average of lot blank results when standards are prepared in reagent blanks (Section 7.7)
(For any blank value $< \text{MDL}$, substitute the value of 0.0 for the raw data prior to calculating the averages. The calculated average is subtracted from each sample even if this average is $< \text{MDL}$.)

NOTE: Report $\mu\text{g}/\text{tube}$ results for lot blank, trip blank, field blank(s), and BS/BSD samples because no air volume is collected for these samples.

9.0 QUALITY ASSURANCE/QUALITY CONTROL

All quality control data should be documented and available for reference or inspection.

9.1 Initial Calibration/Calibration Check

A calibration curve must be prepared each day as described in Section 7.2. The correlation coefficient (r) must be greater than or equal to 0.995 for an acceptable calibration. The initial calibration must be verified by analysis of the ICV standard (Section 7.4), the ICB standard (Section 7.2), and the LCS sample (Section 7.3). The ICV result must be within ± 10 percent of the true value. Results for the ICB and method blank must be less than the MDL. The LCS result must be within the Performance Acceptance Limits (PALs) supplied by the vendor.

9.2 Method Detection Limit



U. S. EPA ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSE TEAM

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

SOP: 1827
PAGE: 11 of 22
REV: 3.0
DATE: 02/05/01

ANALYSIS OF MERCURY IN AIR WITH A MODIFIED NIOSH 6009 METHOD

The MDL standard (Section 7.5) must be analyzed at the beginning of sample analysis to verify the Hg MDL. The results for the MDL standard must be within ± 20 percent of the true value. If the MDL standard is not within ± 20 percent, the MDL must be elevated to the concentration of the lowest calibration standard.

9.3 Continuing Calibration Verification

The working standard curve must be verified by analyzing the CCV (Section 7.4) and the CCB standard after every 10 samples. CCV results must be within ± 20 percent of the true value and CCB results must be less than the MDL.

9.4 BS/BSD Samples

At least one BS and one BSD sample (Section 7.6) must be analyzed with each batch of samples (not to exceed 20 samples) to verify precision and accuracy of the method.

BS/BSD percent recovery (%R) should be within the advisory limit of 75-125 percent and calculated as:

$$\%R = \frac{SSR}{SA} \times 100$$

where:

SSR = Spiked (BS or BSD) sample result ($\mu\text{g}/\text{tube}$)
 SA = Spike added ($\mu\text{g}/\text{tube}$)

The Relative Percent Difference (RPD) for the BS/BSD samples should be within the advisory limit of 80-120 percent and calculated as:

$$RPD = \frac{(S \& D)}{(S \% D)/2} \times 100$$

where:

S = %R for BS sample result
 D = %R for BSD sample result

9.5 Dilution Analysis

If the Hg concentration of any sample exceeds the initial calibration range, that sample must be diluted



U. S. EPA ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSE TEAM

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

SOP: 1827
PAGE: 12 of 22
REV: 3.0
DATE: 02/05/01

ANALYSIS OF MERCURY IN AIR WITH A MODIFIED NIOSH 6009 METHOD

and reanalyzed. Use the results of the original analysis to determine the approximate dilution factor required to get a Hg concentration within the initial linear calibration range. Dilute the sample (less than 10 mL sample required for analysis) and analyze the diluted sample aliquot. Report results for the diluted aliquot with the lowest dilution factor which produces a Hg concentration in the linear calibration range (see Section 8.0).

10.0 DATA VALIDATION

Data will be assessed by the Data Validation & Report Writing Group using the most current revision of the ERT/REACSOP #1017, Data Validation Procedure for Routine Inorganic Analysis. However, data is considered satisfactory for submission purposes when all of the requirements listed in the method are met.

11.0 HEALTH AND SAFETY

The toxicity or carcinogenicity of each reagent used in this method has not been precisely defined. However, each chemical compound should be treated as a potential health hazard. The laboratory is responsible for following the chemical hygiene plan and laboratory safety program regarding the safe handling of the chemicals specified in this method.

When working with potentially hazardous materials, refer to U.S. EPA, Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and corporate health and safety practices. More specifically, refer to ERT/REAC SOP #3013, *REAC Laboratory Safety Program*.

The analyst should consult all appropriate MSDS information prior to running an analysis for the first time.

12.0 REFERENCES

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Office of Solid Waste and Emergency Response. 1992. *Test Methods for Evaluating Solid Waste*, SW-846. 3rd ed.

National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health. 1996. *NIOSH Manual of Analytical Methods*. Method 6009. 4th ed. Suppl.

U.S. EPA ERT/REAC SOP #1818, *Determination of Metals by Atomic Absorption (AA) Methods*.



U. S. EPA ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSE TEAM

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

SOP: 1827
PAGE: 13 of 22
REV: 3.0
DATE: 02/05/01

ANALYSIS OF MERCURY IN AIR WITH A MODIFIED NIOSH 6009 METHOD

APPENDIX A
NIOSH Method 6009 for Mercury
SOP #1827
February 2001



U. S. EPA ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSE TEAM

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

SOP: 1827
PAGE: 14 of 22
REV: 3.0
DATE: 02/05/01

ANALYSIS OF MERCURY IN AIR WITH A MODIFIED NIOSH 6009 METHOD

METHOD #: 6009
Suppl)

(Issued 5/15/96, 4th ed.

TITLE: MERCURY

ANALYTE:

CAS #:

Mercury
Hg
Quicksilver

7439-97-6

INSTRUMENTATION: AA

FORMULA: Hg
MW: 200.59
RTECS: 0V4550000

METHOD: 6009, Issue 2
May 1989

EVALUATION: PARTIAL

Issue 1: 15

Issue 2: 15

August 1994

OSHA: C 0.1 mg/m³ (skin)
NIOSH: 0.05 mg/m³ (skin)
ACGIH: 0.025 mg/m³ (skin)

PROPERTIES: liquid; d 13.55 g/mL @ 20-C; BP 356-C; HP -39-C;
VP 0.16 Pa
(0.0012 mm Hg; 13.2 mg/m³) @ 20-C; Vapor Density
(air = 1)
7.0



U. S. EPA ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSE TEAM

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

SOP: 1827
PAGE: 15 of 22
REV: 3.0
DATE: 02/05/01

ANALYSIS OF MERCURY IN AIR WITH A MODIFIED NIOSH 6009 METHOD

SAMPLING

SAMPLER: SOLID SORBENT (Hopcalite in single section, 200 mg)

FLOW

RATE: 0.15 to 0.25 L/min

VOL - MIN: 2 L @ 0.5 mg/m³
- MAX: 100 L

SHIPMENT: routine

SAMPLE

STABILITY: 30 days @ 25-C [1]

FIELD BLANKS: 2 to 10 field blanks per set

MEDIA BLANKS: at least 3 per set

ACCURACY

RANGE STUDIED: 0.002 to 0.8 mg/m³ [2]; (10 L samples)

BIAS: not significant

OVERALL

PRECISION(SrT): not determined

ACCURACY: not determined

MEASUREMENT



U. S. EPA ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSE TEAM

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

SOP: 1827
PAGE: 16 of 22
REV: 3.0
DATE: 02/05/01

ANALYSIS OF MERCURY IN AIR WITH A MODIFIED NIOSH 6009 METHOD

TECHNIQUE: ATOMIC ABSORPTION, COLD VAPOR

ANALYTE: elemental mercury

DESORPTION: conc. HN03/HCl @ 25-C, dilute to 50 mL

WAVELENGTH: 253.7 nm

CALIBRATION: standard solutions of Hg^{2+} in 1% HN03

RANGE: 0.1 to 1.2 ug per sample

ESTIMATED LOD: 0.03 ug per sample

PRECISION (Sr): 0.042 @ 0.9 to 3/ug per sample [4]

APPLICABILITY:

The working range is 0.01 to 0.5 mg/m³ for a 10 L air sample. The sorbent material irreversibly collects elemental mercury. A prefilter can be used to exclude particulate mercury species from the sample. The prefilter can be analyzed by similar methodology. The method has been used in numerous field surveys [3].

INTERFERENCES:

Inorganic and organic mercury compounds may cause a positive interference. Oxidizing gases, including chlorine, do not interfere.



U. S. EPA ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSE TEAM

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

SOP: 1827
PAGE: 17 of 22
REV: 3.0
DATE: 02/05/01

ANALYSIS OF MERCURY IN AIR WITH A MODIFIED NIOSH 6009 METHOD

OTHER METHODS:

This replaces method 6000 and its predecessors, which required a specialized desorption apparatus [4, 5, 6]. This method is based on the method of Rathje and Marcero [7] and is similar to the OSHA method ID 145H [2].

REAGENTS:

1. Water, organics-free, deionized.
2. Hydrochloric acid (HCl), conc.
3. Nitric acid (HNO₃) 1 conc.
4. Mercuric oxide, reagent grade, dry.
5. Calibration stock solution, Hg²⁺, 1000 ug/mL. Commercially available
or dissolve 1.0798 g of dry mercuric oxide (HgO) in 50 mL of 1:1 hydrochloric acid, then dilute to 1 L with deionized water.
6. Intermediate mercury standard, 1 ug/mL. Place 0.1 mL 1000 ug/mL stock
Into a 100 mL volumetric containing 10 mL deionized water and 1 mL hydrochloric acid. Dilute to volume with deionized water. Prepare fresh daily.
7. Stannous chloride, reagent grade, 10% in 1:1 HCl. Dissolve 20 g stannous chloride in 100 mL conc. HCl. Slowly add this solution to 100 mL deionized water and mix well. Prepare fresh daily.
8. Nitric acid, 1% (w/v). Dilute 14 mL conc. HNO₃ to 1 L with



U. S. EPA ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSE TEAM

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

SOP: 1827
PAGE: 18 of 22
REV: 3.0
DATE: 02/05/01

ANALYSIS OF MERCURY IN AIR WITH A MODIFIED NIOSH 6009 METHOD

dei on i z e d
water.

EQUIPMENT:

Sampler: glass tube, 7 cm long, 6 mm OD, 4 mm ID, flame sealed ends with plastic caps, containing one section of 200 mg Hopcalfte held in place by glass wool plugs (SKC, Inc., Cat. #226-17-1A, or equivalent).

NOTE: A 37 mm, cellulose ester membrane filter in a cassette preceding the sorbent may be used if particulate mercury is to be determined separately.

2. Personal sampling pump, 0.15 to 0.25 L/min, with flexible connecting tubing.
3. Atomic absorption spectrophotometer with cold vapor generation system (see Appendix) or cold vapor mercury analysis system.*
4. Strip chart recorder, or integrator.
5. Flasks, volumetric, 50 mL, and 100 mL.
6. Pipet, 5 mL, 20 mL, others as needed.
7. Micropipet, 1 to 1000 uL.
8. Bottles, biological oxygen demand (BOD), 300 mL.

* See SPECIAL PRECAUTIONS

SPECIAL PRECAUTIONS: Mercury is readily absorbed by inhalation and contact with the skin. Operate the mercury system in a hood, or bubble vented



U. S. EPA ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSE TEAM

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

SOP: 1827
PAGE: 19 of 22
REV: 3.0
DATE: 02/05/01

ANALYSIS OF MERCURY IN AIR WITH A MODIFIED NIOSH 6009 METHOD

mercury through a mercury scrubber.

SAMPLING:

1. Calibrate each personal sampling pump with a representative sampler in line.
2. Break ends of sampler immediately prior to sampling. Attach sampler to pump with flexible tubing.
3. Sample at an accurately known rate of 0.15 to 0.25 L/min for a total sample size between 2 and 100 L.

NOTE: Include a minimum of three unopened sampling tubes from the same lot as the samples for use as media blanks.

4. Cap sampler and pack securely for shipment.

SAMPLE PREPARATION:

5. Place the Hopcalite sorbent and the front glass wool plug from each sampler in separate 50 mL volumetric flasks.
6. Add 2.5 mL conc. HNO_3 followed by 2.5 mL conc. HCl .

NOTE: The mercury must be in the oxidized state to avoid loss. For this reason, the nitric acid must be added first.

7. Allow the sample to stand for 1 h or until the black Hopcalite sorbent is dissolved. The solution will turn dark brown and may



U. S. EPA ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSE TEAM

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

SOP: 1827
PAGE: 20 of 22
REV: 3.0
DATE: 02/05/01

ANALYSIS OF MERCURY IN AIR WITH A MODIFIED NIOSH 6009 METHOD

contain

undissolved material.

8. Carefully dilute to 50 mL with deionized water. (Final solution is

blue to blue-green).

9. Using a volumetric pipet, transfer 20 mL of the sample to a BOD bottle

containing 80 mL of deionized water. If the amount of mercury in the

sample is expected to exceed the standards, a smaller aliquot may be

taken, and the volume of acid adjusted accordingly. The final volume

in the BOD bottle.

CALIBRATION AND QUALITY CONTROL:

10. Prepare a minimum of two series (six levels each) of working standards

covering the range 0.01 to 0.5 ug Hg per aliquot by adding known

amounts of the intermediate standard to BOD bottles containing enough

1% nitric acid to bring the final volume to 100 mL.

11. Analyze the working standards together with the samples and blanks

(steps 13 through 16). Analyze full set of standards at the beginning

of the run, and a second set at the end of the run.

Additional

standards may be run intermediately during the analysis to confirm

instrument response.

12. Prepare calibration graph (peak height vs. solution concentration,



U. S. EPA ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSE TEAM

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

SOP: 1827
PAGE: 21 of 22
REV: 3.0
DATE: 02/05/01

ANALYSIS OF MERCURY IN AIR WITH A MODIFIED NIOSH 6009 METHOD

ug/sample).

MEASUREMENT:

13. Zero the spectrophotometer by removing the bubbler from the BOD

bottle, allowing the baseline on the recorder to stabilize.

14. Place the bubbler in a BOD bottle containing 0.5 ug mercury in 100 mL

1% nitric acid. Adjust the spectrophotometer so that it will give a

75% to full-scale deflection of the recorder.

15. Vent the mercury vapor from the system.

16. Analyze standards, samples and blanks (including media blanks).

a. Remove the bubbler from the BOD bottle.

b. Rinse the bubbler with deionized water.

c. Allow the recorder tracing to establish a stable baseline.

d. Remove the stopper from the BOD bottle containing the next sample

to be analyzed. Gently swirl the BOD bottle.

e. Quickly add 5 mL 10% stannous chloride solution.

f. Quickly place the bubbler into the BOD bottle.

g. Allow the spectrophotometer to attain maximum absorbance.

h. Vent the mercury vapor from the system.

i. Place the bubbler into an empty BOD bottle. Continue venting the

mercury until a stable baseline is obtained.

j. Close the mercury vent.

CALCULATIONS:

17. Calculate the amount of mercury in the sample aliquot (W, ug) from the



U. S. EPA ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSE TEAM

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

SOP: 1827
PAGE: 22 of 22
REV: 3.0
DATE: 02/05/01

ANALYSIS OF MERCURY IN AIR WITH A MODIFIED NIOSH 6009 METHOD

calibration graph.

18. Calculate the concentration C (mg/m³), of mercury in the air volume sampled, V (L):

$$C = [W * (V_s / V_a) - B] / V$$

Where:

V_s = original sample volume (step 8; normally 50 mL)

V_a = aliquot volume (step 9; normally 20 mL)

B = average amount of mercury present in the media blanks

EVALUATION OF METHOD:

Rathje and Marcero originally used Hopcalite (MSA, Inc.) as the sorbent material [7]. Later, Hopcalite was shown superior to other methods for the determination of mercury vapor [8]. Atmospheres of mercury vapor for the study were dynamically generated in the range 0.05 to 0.2 mg/m³ and an adsorbent tube loading of 1 to 7 ug was used. The Hydrar material sometimes used in the present method is similar to Hopcalite. No significant difference in the laboratory analysis of mercury collected on the two sorbent materials was observed [9]. OSHA also validated a method for mercury using Hydrar [2]. An average 99% recovery, with $sr = 0.042$, was seen for 18 samples with known amounts (0.9 to 3 ug) of mercury added (as



U. S. EPA ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSE TEAM

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

SOP: 1827
PAGE: 23 of 22
REV: 3.0
DATE: 02/05/01

ANALYSIS OF MERCURY IN AIR WITH A MODIFIED NIOSH 6009 METHOD

Hg(N03)2) [10]. No change in recovery was seen for samples stored up to 3 weeks at room temperature or up to 3 months at -15-C; longer storage times were not investigated [10].

REFERENCES:

- [1] Evaluation of Mercury Solid Sorbent Passive Dosimeter. Backup Data Report. Inorganic Section, OSHA Analytical Laboratory, Salt Lake City, Utah, 1985.
- [2] Mercury in Workplace Atmospheres (Hydrar Tubes). Method ID 145H, Inorganic Section, OSHA Analytical Laboratory, Salt Lake City, Utah, 1987.
- [3] NIOSH/MRSB. Reports for Analytical Sequence Nos. 5854, 5900, 6219, and 6311, NIOSH (Unpublished, 1987-1988).
- [4] NIOSH Manual of Analytical Methods, 3rd. ed., Method 6000. (1984).
- [5] NIOSH Manual of Analytical Methods, 2nd. ed., V.4, S199, U. S. Dept. of Health, Education, and Welfare Publ. (NIOSH) 78-175 (1978).
- [6] Ibid., V.5, P&CAM 175, Publ. (NIOSH) 79-141 (1979).
- [7] Rathje, A. O., Marcero, D. H. Improved hopcalite procedure for the determination of mercury in air by flameless atomic absorption, Am. Ind. Hyg. Assoc. J., 37: 311-314 (1976).
- [8] McCammon, C. S., Edwards, S. L., Hull, R. D., Woodfin, W. J., A



U. S. EPA ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSE TEAM

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

SOP: 1827
PAGE: 24 of 22
REV: 3.0
DATE: 02/05/01

ANALYSIS OF MERCURY IN AIR WITH A MODIFIED NIOSH 6009 METHOD

comparison of four personal sampling methods for the determination of

mercury vapor, Am. Ind. Hyg. Assoc. J., 41:528-531 (1980).

[9] Internal Methods Development Research, Data Chem, Inc., Salt Lake

City, Utah (1982).

[10] Eller, P.M., NIOSH, unpublished data (1987-88).

METHOD WRITTEN BY: Keith R. Nicholson and Michael R. Steele,
Data Chem,
Inc., Salt Lake City, Utah. under NIOSH contract No.
200-87-2533.

APPENDIX: Cold Vapor Mercury Analysis System

1. The valve should direct the vented vapors to a hood or to a mercury scrubber system.
2. When the valve is opened to "Vent" the peristaltic pump should draw room air. Place a Hydrar tube in the air intake to eliminate any mercury that may be present.
3. Adjust the peristaltic pump to a flow which will create a steady stream of bubbles in the BOD bottle, but not so great that solution droplets enter the tubing to the quartz cell.
4. If water vapor condenses in the quartz cell, heat the cell slightly above room temperature by wrapping it with a heating coil and attaching a variable transformer.
5. The bubbler consists of a glass tube with a bulb at the



U. S. EPA ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSE TEAM

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

SOP: 1827
PAGE: 25 of 22
REV: 3.0
DATE: 02/05/01

ANALYSIS OF MERCURY IN AIR WITH A MODIFIED NIOSH 6009 METHOD

bottom,

slightly above the bottom of the BOD bottle. The bulb contains several

perforations to allow air to escape into the solution (in a stream of

small bubbles). A second tube is provided to allow the exit of the

vapor. The open end of the second tube is well above the surface of

the liquid in the bottle. The two tubes are fixed into a stoppering

device (preferably ground glass) which fits into the top of the

bottle. A coarse glass frit can be used in place of the bulb on the

first tube. However, it is more difficult to prevent contamination

when a frit is used.

6. Replace the flexible tubing (Tygon or equivalent) used to connect the

bubbler, cell, and pump periodically to prevent contamination from

adsorbed mercury.